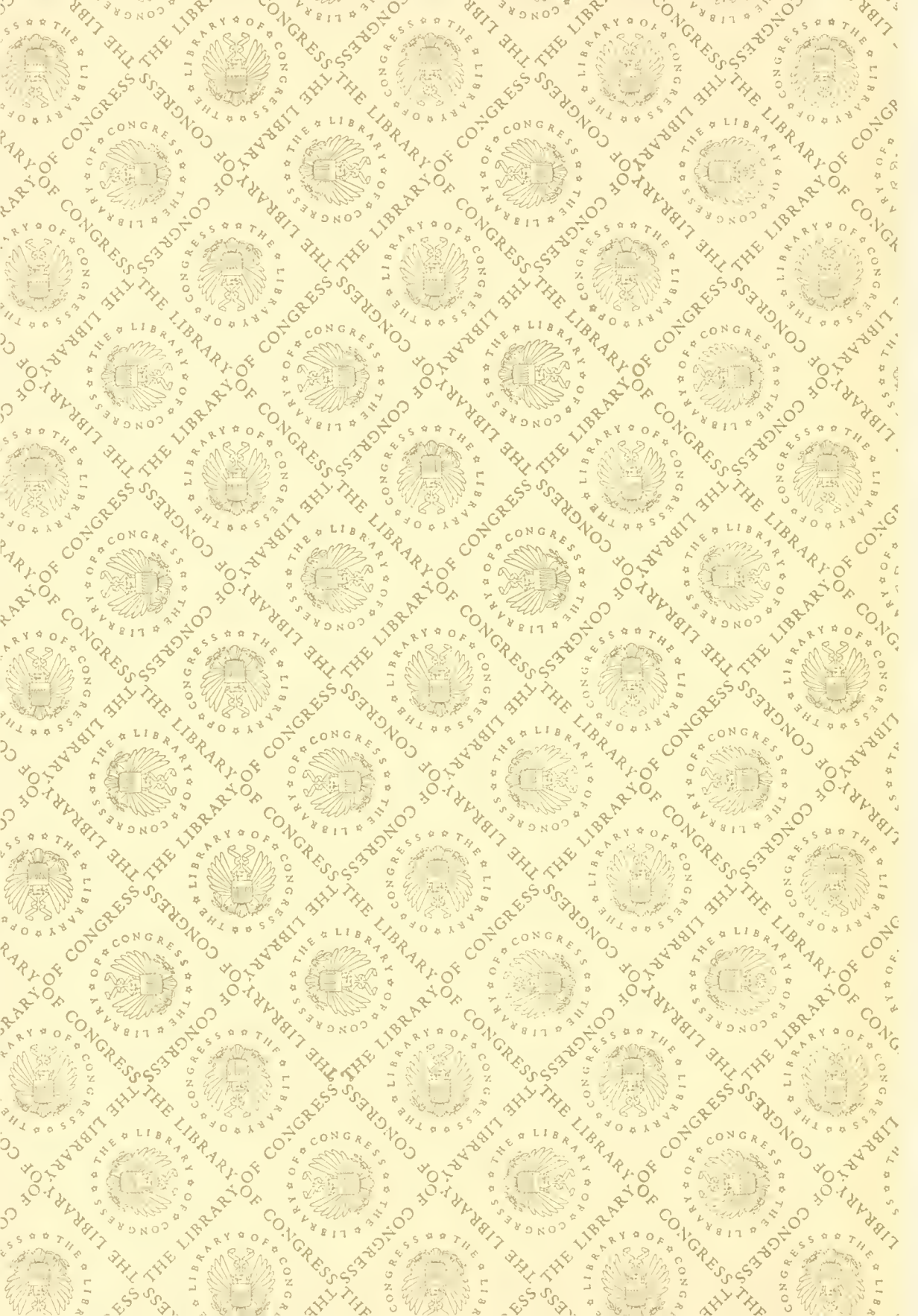
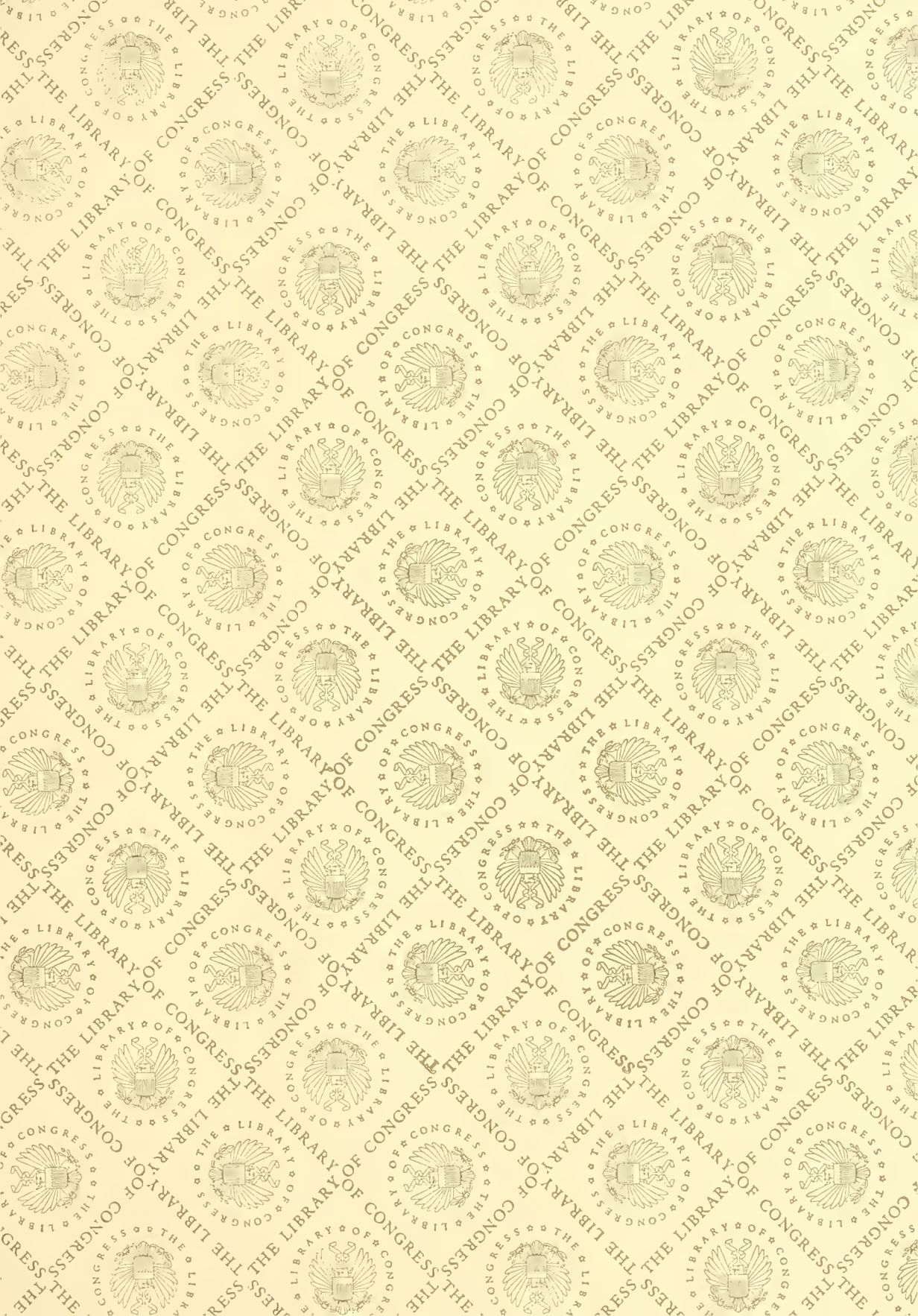


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THE SNO V-CAP SISTERS

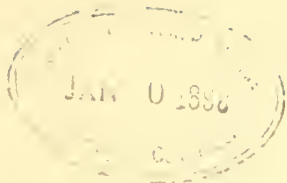
A Farce

BY
RUTH MCENERY STUART



NEW YORK AND LONDON
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
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THE SNOW-CAP SISTERS.

A Farce.

BY RUTH MCENERY STUART.

CHARACTERS:

GRANNY SNOW, mother of eleven daughters.
MISS PATTI LIND SNOW, a prima donna.
MISSSES LOUFESEY and LOUIZEY SNOW, twin sisters.
THE DUMB MISS SNOW, no name.
MISS ELLA SNOW, doctor's maid.
MISS SUSAN DEPILORE SNOW, who mourns a lost lover.
WING POO, the celestial Miss Snow.
MISS JO-HANNA JIM-MIMY SNOW, a "woman's righter."
MISS YALLER BUFF SNOW, an artist.
THE LATE LAMENTED MISS SNOW, in jail.
MISS SAPHO SUSSETINA, poet.
GRAVY, a little colored boy, singer.

SCENE.—Ordinary stage for fishings, for short performance.
A line of eleven chairs about the centre of the stage.

Performers enter in single file, all limping, the Mother leading, and The Late Miss Snow, pushed in on rollers by Gravy, bringing up the rear.

Mother and daughters are dressed more or less in character, but all wear tall "Mother Goose" white caps of silver paper, or covered with Canton flannel.

They enter from left, pass in front of chairs and retire by around them, stand in front of them the second time—all except The Late Lamented, who is pushed into place by Gravy and The Late Welcomed, who comes in late and is assigned to the Mother's chair.

When they are standing in line, the Mother steps forward and, raising her finger, says:

Mother. Gals, attention. (Daughters straighten themselves in line.) Gals, how. Howdy, folks! [All bow.

(To audience.) You see before you, ladies and gentlemen, the celebrated Snow-Cap gals of Snow Mountains. They've come to take you by storm—a regular snow-storm. Though I am a sayin' it as shouldn't, bein' their own dear belovin' mother, they is sweet gals.

(Then to daughters.) Say out sing) your piece now, gals. (Girls recite in concert, with cap drill.)

CAP DRILL.

O, we are the wonderful Snow-Cap sisters—cap sisters.
We greet you this evening, dear misses and misters—and misters,

By setting our beautiful snow-covered cappies—our cappies,
 For all of your best and your handsomest chappies—your chappies.

The fact is

We practise

No art of flirtation,

Or cold flirtation,

But setting our caps

Right and left for the chaps:

Just *this* way, and *tho' so* y, and *this* way, and *this*—

We are sure in this drill there is nothing amiss—

We secure in the beaux

Who're inclined to propose;

For we aim at the one whom we wish—*tra, la, la!*

And when the play's over, he speaks to mamma

(*This drill may be manipulated to suit invidious taste. The author suggests only a few picture figures. Let all raise caps with both hands, and so, then a look at repetition "cap sisters," end of first line. Set them well forward on foreheads at "your chappies," end of second line. At eleventh and twelfth lines a pretty drill may come in, and at last they are aimed at random.*)

Gals, set down.

(*Daughters are seated all but war figure.*)

(*To audience again.*) I say you see the Snow gals, but in p'int of fact, ladies and gentlemen, you do not see all the sisters, for this here one ain't nary sister. She's wax. (*Begins to weep.*) She's jest a make-believe. She ain't nothin' but a statute. [Tears.

Forty years ago, dear friends, we was a happy family, me an' my gals; but one day a book-agent comes to our mountains, an' he was so pleasin' an' so persuadin' an' so insistin', saw likenesses in my gals to all the royal families, an'—well, we took all he had. He had plush albums, an' we took them; an' he had fly-screens, an' we took them; an' mouse-traps an' measles, an'—an' we took them. (*Whimpers.*) We all had 'em—the measles I mean. Of co'se Dolly she had 'em the worst, an' they give her fits, an' fits killed her. Fust! Why we couldn't *count 'er fits*, an' that's why she's a *counterfeit*. 'This is her very spit an' image. Yes, dear friends, ef it hadn't 'a' been for my *sick family* you wouldn't never 'a' seen this *far-simile*. All my gals is sweet, but this is my *chief-do-over*. Roll her out, Gravy.

[Gravy rolls her out, and Mother seizes crank attached to arm, manipulating it as she proceeds.

When she departed this life her eyes was sot 'way back in her head, jest like this:

[Dolly rolls eyes as crank turns. All daughters weep silently in handkerchiefs.

An' she called my name so sweet, jest like this:

[Dolly says "Ma-ma."

An' she cried so sweet, jest like this: [Mother cries.

You see, we keeps her dressed up in her Sunday clo'es, an' when she's to home we mos' gea'lly sets her on the piany. She was mightily set on music, an', of co'se, standin' there she gets it whenever it's a-goin'.

The expenses of this wax figur', calculated down to a cent, is jest about the same as for them that are still in the flesh, for what we save in bread an' meat, why we pay out for Gravy. An', by-the way, ladies and gentlemen, this young gentleman is our soup, an' bein' as he is so richly colored and highly flavored, we calls him Gravy, an' sometimes Sass, when he merits it.

Roll her back, Gravy. [Gravy rolls her back into line.

"Tain't no use a-cryin' over spilt milk; she's dead an' gone too long ago to talk about. Dry your tears, gals, an' prepare to welcome your late sister.

[Miss Ella Snow comes rushing in laden with bundles, etc. Passes in view back of sisters, and then comes to her place, putting her numerous bundles down before she embraces the family all round.

[With good acting this is effective.] When greetings are over, Mother leads her to front.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is our elocutionary star,

Miss Ella Snow. She's took cold, inhaled a live icielegerm, comin' down the mountain, an' it give her such a influenza that I can't hardly influence her to speak in public. These attacks o' sneezin' make her feel very predisposed. [Ella sneezes frequently.] When anything ends her, I'm pretty sure it'll be the influenza. But all the same, Ella is very cute. [Turning to Ella.]

Elocute now.

She will now recite, with approbrious gestures, Milton's "Paradise Lost" in full. Say it now, Ella, jest the way Mr. Milton put it down in the book.

Ella. Dadies ad gedderberl. [Sneezes.] Had be a tubbler o' water, Graby. [Dadies sneezes.] C'ubbing south I took cold. [Sneezes.] Me dadies ided I stopped up. Gib me a lebel, Graby. [Gravy hands her a lebel.] Dadies ad gedderberl, I wid d'ow recite Billo's "Paradise Lost" in full. [Sneezes.] "Ob ban's first disobedients ad the— [Sneezes.] Ob ban's fir—" [Sneezes helplessly.]

Mother. They ain't no puttin' on about that! Ladies and

gentlemen. Ella is surely unfit for reclamation. She will, however, appear later on, when she will play the gals compliments to their songs; for, besides bein' an' A-1 dramatizer, Ella is a musical prodigal. Set down, Ella, an' commence with your lemon.

[Mother brings forward deaf-mute.

Sorrow wrings my maternal bosom, my friends, when I fetch out this one. She's deaf. Can't hear thunder. Can't talk, neither. She don't hear a word I'm sayin' now. Listen. (*Turning to Mute*.) Can you hear?

[Ella shakes her head no.

She can't. Can you talk?

Ella. No.

Mother. She can't. I have to touch her. She knows her mother's gentle touch.

[Sizes her roughly.

She ain't got no name. What was the use? "Twouldn't 'a' done no good. We jest calls her Dummy. I was brought up frugal, I was, an' we used up consider'ble names on the other gals, pa an' me did.

Set down, Dummy. She don't hear. (*Makes signs. Dummy sits.*) And now, ladies and gentlemen, I bring from her seclusion Miss Susan Deplora Snow, who mourns a long-lost lover. This sweet creature lost her beau jest fifty-one years ago to-night.

[Miss Susan comes forward, her face buried in her handkerchief, weeping.

He was a noble youth. He fought in the Mexican war with Alexander the Great, served in Congress with Junius Caesar, was contemporaneous with Christopher Columbus, Prester John, and the Crack eye twins. He died of a sudden attack of the Susan-side, right at Susan's side. Shot hisself right through the epigram (or diagram). It was all on account o' them Crack-eye boys. They both had compound cases on Susan, an' she ain't never looked up since.

'Tain't many a young girl that mourns a lost lover for fifty long years. She'd be a sweet *débutante* now if she'd come out of her grief. Won't you come out of it, honey? She won't. She's a wastin' all 'er youth on 'im. We've done all we can to make her begin to take notice, but 'tain't no use. Control your feelin', Susie dear, and sing for us one of your heart rendering songs. She will control her grief for one brief moment if the audience will kindly look pleasant, and give us one of her most touchin' *solo voices*. That's a Latin illusion. Me and my gals we

talks Latin constant when we are to home on the peaks.
Sing, Susie dear, or, as we say in Latin, *Veni, vidi, vici.*

[Susie sings, to the air of "*When the Seallows Homeward Fly.*"]

Since my lover upped and died,
Shot hisself right at my side,
Through his precious epigram,
I will stay just what I am,
For since he is dead, dead, dead,
I will never wed, wed, wed,
'Till some one besides my mother
Begs me for to love another.

[Susie retires now, and the Mother brings forward Miss Jo-hanna Jim-minny Snow.]

Mother. We will now introduce to you, my dear friends, Miss Jo-hanna Jim-minny Snow. She is a woman's righter, she is. She's got all sorts of mannish notions. She's what you call a strong-minder. She don't allow that the mascul-line sect has got any rights that ain't hern—not a one. She jest uses the he's an' she's promisc'n'us. Why, like as not ef any young man was to give her a bunch of helotropes she'd say, "Much obliged to you for these here she-liotropes." She done it once-t.

She 'ain't got no use for pots an' kittles an' as for a thimble, I give her one once-t an' she had it mounted on a walkin'-cane for a gold head. But it ain't necessary for me to say much about her sentiments. She's fully able to speak for herself. Speak up like a little ipaa, Jo-hanna, dear.

Jo-hanna. Folks. I object to the term "ladies and gentlemen." Why this humiliating distinction? Are we not all folks? I am a folk. You are a folk. (*Pointing to herself and then to any chosen one.*) And so I address you in the most comprehensible manner when I say dear folks. My heart swells with pride as I feel myself in my proper sp'ere. I grow dizzy with the flood of eloquence that suffuses my brain and rushes for escape to my lips.

Mother. Condense your communications, Jo-hanna, dear, into rhythm. Cramp them into poetic infusion. Let them flow in metric numbers. There is safety in numbers.

Jo-hanna. I fear that poetic expression savors of effemination. I am sure it does; and yet, to show that I am not altogether ashamed of my sect, I will pour out my soul in verse.

Mother. Pour it out, honey.

Jo-hanna. I will. (*Retires*)

THE SNOW-CAPPED SISTERS.

I am a woman
 And therefore human.
 The female sect
 Deserves respect.
 Conscions I am
 I'm not a clam.
 Nor do I plan
 To be a man,
 But claim to be
 As great as he,
 Probably later
 I shall be greater.
 A goose is grander
 Than any gander.
 Heus is more knowin'
 Without no crowin'
 Than any rooster
 That I been used to.

Mother. Them's noble sentiments, my daughter. I think I feel in Jo-hanna the pride I should 've experienced in a only son. When she pours forth sech eloquent arguments I have to close my ears to keep from voting for the ballot immediately. Sometimes at home when she and her sisters get to arguin' I go an' vote jest to get rid of my convictions. Of course it don't hurt, the way I vote. I jest drop any old ballot into any old tree. But I have the satisfaction of knowin' that I've voted—an' that seems to be about all the satisfaction anybody gets out of it.

This, ladies and gentlemen (*bring forward Patti-Lind*), is our warbler, Patti-Lind Snow. A mockin'-bird listened to her a-singin' one day, an' he took p'izen. "I'm out-sung," says he. "She's done took the rag of the bush. Farewell, tree-tops. I won't live no singsong existence," says he, "after bein' beat at my own game," an' with that he took a dose-t o' p'izen an' died.

This, dear friends, is the mortal remains of the mockin'-bird thet died o' the green-eye. [*Holds up stuffed parrot.* Sing, Patti-Lind, dear.

[*Patti sings anything. "Listen to the mocking-bird," for instance. Others join in if agreeable.*

Mother. And now, dear friends, we come to the pride of the Snow family—in fact, our double pride—our twins. I may as well out with it. They is twins.

[*Brings forward twins, one tall and slight, the other very short, etc. Exactly opposite in every way. One wears large ribbon bow tied on arm.*

Loueey and Louisy. Some calls 'em Tweedledum and Tweedledee; and their poor pa he used to call 'em T'other and Which, because he couldn't tell t'other *from* which. Of course he always called the one he spoke to Which, an' the other one would have to be T'other. I get 'em mixed myself sometimes, so you see I tie a ribbon 'round T'other's arm so's I can tell her. An' sometimes I forget which one I tied the ribbon on. Only last week Louezy was sick an' I gave the pills to Louisy. Ef they was like the Siamesers 'twouldn't 'a' made no difference. But when twins is divided up, you has to be keerful. Twins is like a philopema. The two halves ain't always fo'ordained to be et by the same person.

Louezy and Louisy will now perform.

[*The twins, taking hands, recite some infantile verse. They may do this together, or first one and then the other, and then both together, always repeating, verbatim, each what the other says. When they have finished, the other sisters sing in chorus:*

The twineses done it very well, very well, very well.
The twineses done it very well, very, very well.

Mother. And this here one, my friends (*pointing to poet daughter*), is our poet daughter, Sappho Sonnetum. We used to call her a poetess, but they say the esses is all gone out, an' any woman or gal that can do anything at all is classed with the he-ones. Of course you can see she's a poet quick as you look at her. She's a yearner, she is. She says she ever yearns for the unattainable—whatever that is. She looked jest as you see her ever sence she was born—no older an' no younger. She did seem to look old to us when she was teething, but she's sort o' caught up with herself now. She says she's immortal, an' I reckon she's jest about hit it. I want her to come forward an' be introduced, but I ain't sure I can reach her. Course sounds don't make no impression on her.

(*Calls*). Sapphy, honey, come forward!

[*Sapphy still gazes in the distance and seems not to hear.*

She don't gen'ally come to less'n the moon's out. H is that half moon, Gravy!

[*Gravy crosses stage, and by a pulley contrivance draws up a huge gilt crescent. As soon as S sees it she raises her arms and gradually rises from her seat in rapt adoration of the moon. Mother calls her*

several times, but she seems not to hear, keeping her face to the crescent.

If I jest had a lute! That would rouse her. (*Turns to audience.*) Th' ain't nobody here thet's got a stray lute in his pocket, is they? No, th' ain't no lute to be had.

[*At this Gravy comes forward with a jew's-harp, which the Mother bids him play, hoping to rouse her. At the first notes she falls in a faint, and several of the sisters run to the rescue, fanning, calling for salts, a hot water bag, etc. During this commotion Gravy may, if he can, come to the front with his jew's-harp and accompany himself while he dances a jig, or he may play "bones," and be accompanied by a piano behind the scenes. When this is over, and the poet is revived, the Mother comes forward again.*

Well, folks, you've *seen* her, anyhow. You can go home an' say you've saw a live poet, an' a poet worth seein', for *it's all in her*. She 'ain't never wrote none of it out—not a line.

She's a livin' example of what's put down in the books as the poetic temperament, an' them thet 'ain't got *that* ain't no poets, don't keer what they write.

No, she don't never write poetry; she jest *experiences* it. She says she'd a heap rather *be* a poet than to write poetry. You see, them thet gets shet o' their poems, why they eases down jest like common folks. She keeps the other gals busy getherin' flowers with the dew on 'em for her drinkin'-water; an' as for eatin'—well, I haf to fix her dinner with a microscope, an' then, half the time, she 'lows she's overet. She's mighty idiosyncratic, Sapphy is.

Mother. And now, ladies and gentlemen, I have the pleasure of presenting to you our daughter, Yaller Buff. She is a real artist. Please observe her technique.

[*Turns Yaller Buff round and round*

And, you see, she is very broad. (*Yaller Buff should be a fat girl.*) She is an impressionist of the blackest dye. She sees nature *as it is*. And that's the way she paints it. Indeed, her pictures are so very everlastingly real that they won't bear movin'. You see, she *gets the thing itself*. There's more or less water in all her land-scapes and they *spill out*, and even when there ain't no water, there's ap' to be rock, an' they are too heavy to transport.

Oh yes, it's so! The gals bathed every day last year in one of her seascapes. Dummy got in one day and nearly drowned. She couldn't call you see, and before we could get behind the picture and pull her out she

was most dead. They did go fishing in some of her sketches, for a while. But in never seemed to me them fish could be nourishin', an' I stopped it. I thought it was going too far. That seems like lettin' art get away with nature altogether. Of course bathin' is different.

But although we couldn't fetch no landscapes, we could bring a few of her smaller sketches. This, for instance, is a life study of a cat. (*Produces a live cat or some other small alive animal, fastened in a frame.*) You see by this, my friends, what I mean by realistic art. This cat not only seems to squirm, but it will eat. See it drink milk. One example is enough. The point is that she sees what she wants to get—and gets it, Yaller Buff does. She painted that cat in one sittin'. Lay the cat sketch aside, honey, an' set down.

[Yaller Buff sits.

And now, dear friends, I have the great honor to introduce to you my fourth daughter, Marie Elise. She's French. N'est ce pas vrais, Marie? Yes, she's French. She was christened Mary Eliza, but when we found out she was French, of course, we had to translate her. We thought for a while that she was dummy. She never understood nothin' we said, an' kept a-shruggin' of her shoulders, *comme ça*. (*Shows how.*) She took it after poor dear pa's antecessors. They was French. The first word she ever said I'll never forget. It was, "Comprend pas," and poor dear pa he thought she said, "Come to pa," an' he held out his dear old arms to her, but she never went. Jest kep' a-shruggin' her shoulders worse 'n ever. We might never 've knowed she was French, 'ceptin' for me havin' a French dictionary. We expounded her on that, and now she speaks American passable. Parley a little for 'us, *cherie*.

Marie Elise. Bonsoir, mes Amis. I thang you vary much, dear fwends, for yo' kind attention deze evenin'. I weech, me, I can spik mo' better, it would be for me one grand plaisir. Mais eef I cannot spik, I can h'any'ow seeng fo' you one leel song. Dees leel song wad an goin' seeng, ces translate fwom de Fwench. Wen he ces twanslate, he make like dis.

[*Sing any sentimental song, giving it a French accent.*

Mother. In contrast to our dear French daughter, I shall presently bring forward Miss Wing Foo Peak, our sweet Celestial. It happened this way. It was the year we spent on the Snow Caps without ever coming down. Everything there was so white an' heavenly, and we seemed almost to forget we was mortals, and I said to

poor dear pa: "Pa, dearie, said I, if heaven should send us another daughter here, she'd be a Celestial being I'm sure." And so she was. She come to us jest as you see her, dress and pigtail and all. She's a Buddhist in faith, of course, but we're a-hopin' to convert her gradually. What are you trying to be, Wing Foo? Tell the ladies an' gentlemen.

Wing Foo laughs and says, with a bashful nod, "Tly to be good Christian."

Yes, she is trying to be a good Christian. What is the hardest thing for you to learn, Wing Foo—to do as your Christian friends do?

Wing Foo. Sassy mudder—sassy fodder—sassy all-a ole peoples.

Mother. Yes, you see she has the Oriental spirit—that's what dear pa said. And all her pretty manners, her salaams, and all the rest of it she knew from the day she was born. In fact, when the little thing was laid in my arms, she raised her tiny yaller hand to her forehead and showed me that she was tryin' to greet me right. Oh, yes, she's a little Chinese, she is. Ain't you, Wingie?

Wing Foo. You bet.

[Wing Foo goes through various performances, bowing with forehead to the floor, etc., etc.; then after saluting the audience, she retires to her place.

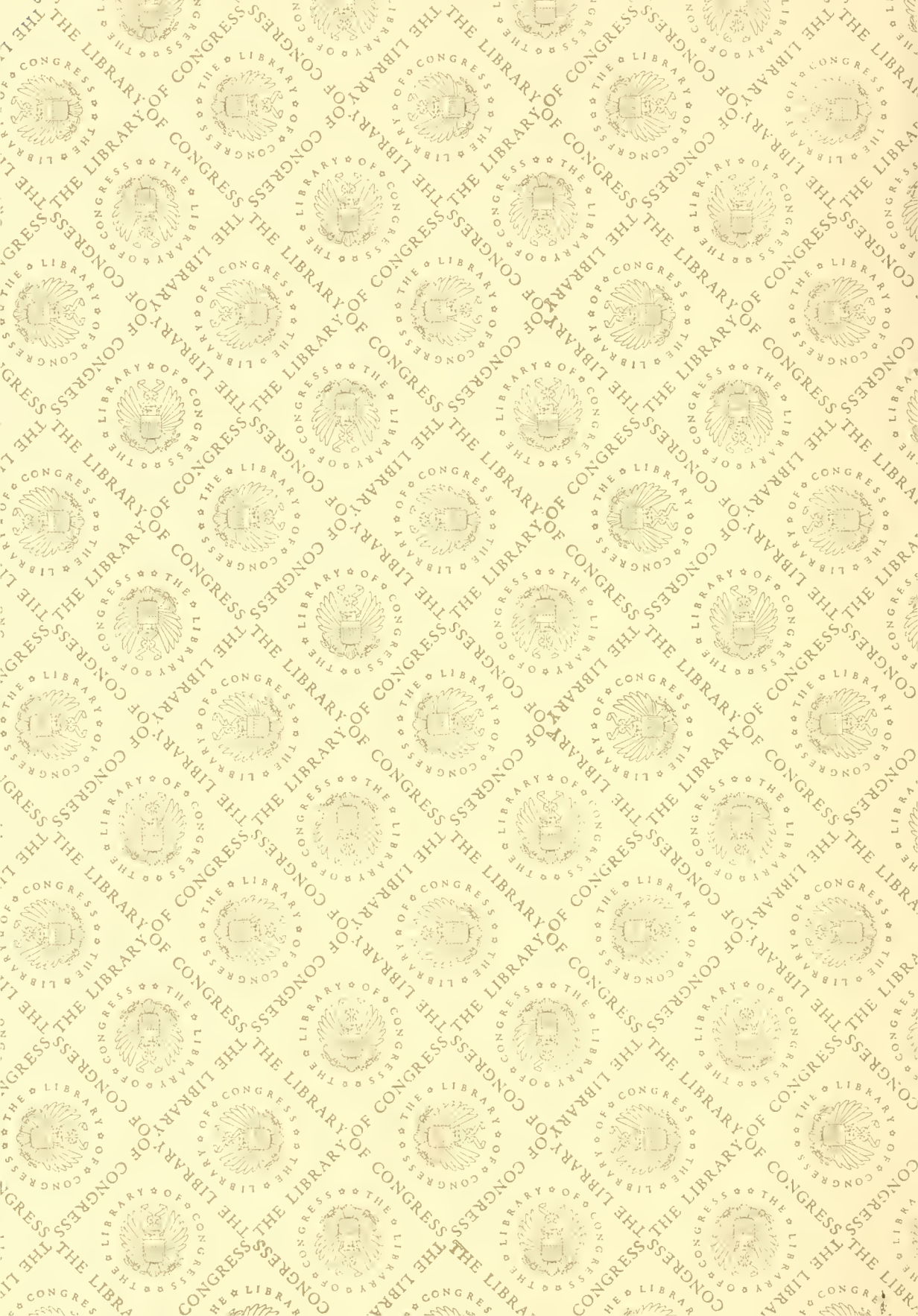
Mother. Thanking you for your kind attention, my dear friends, and for the money so cheerfully paid at the door, I wish to say that no two of our performances ain't alike. My gals is very talented in more ways than one. And jest to prove what I say I invite anybody present to say what kind of music he would like to hear as a closin' number. Of course you can't conveniently pass up pianos or church organs, but any instrument that you can hand up—

[Some one in the audience hands up a comb. The mother takes it, finds a sheet of paper on a table on the stage, and hands it to any one of the daughters. Then the others rush up and take from their own heads similar combs, find that they have sheets of paper convenient and after responding to the command, "Gals, ris," they begin and play "Hone, Sweet Home," in two parts with combs and then sheets of paper. This is easy to do, and is really very pretty. After playing it through once they begin to march, limping as before, and keep up the pattering until they are all off the stage.]

[The little black boy, Gravy, if he is a good actor, makes no end of fun.

[As it is too tiresome to stand still so long, the wax figure is rolled out at any time the players choose, immediately after her part, if she wishes, though she is effective standing there, and if she remains, Gravy may dust her off etc. Then Gravy may take a large palmetto fan and fan the performers, or he may be called out for a dance and song at any time. He has no part regularly assigned him, because he does not properly belong to the Snow-Cap sisters, and the performance is quite complete without him—after his one service. Any bright little girl or boy who is willing to black up can take the part.

[If the Mother is willing to do a little dancing, showing how she and "dear pa" used to step to music, in their young days on the mountains, it will make a charming feature. The Mother should be picturesquely dressed, if convenient, in an old Colonial flowered silk gown. And her dance should contrast very effectively with the plantation jig of the little darky. A very pretty scene is made by their dancing together, interpreting the same music by different movements. Any one may play any available music. When they go out, Gravy, following behind, is laid n down with the boxes, etc., of the late Miss Snow, and he should "Canjine" out if he can.]





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